# CLAIMS

1. A shopping assistance method, comprising the steps of:

 (a) capturing, in respect of two or more shops, item data about items of interest at these shops, and store data indicative of the identity of the shops, at least the item data being captured at premises of the shops concerned;

 (b) organising the captured data so as to associate each piece of item data captured with the store data for the shop where the item data was captured;

 (c) presenting the captured data to show for each shop, information about the items of interest for which item data was captured in that shop.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein said store data comprises location data.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein said store data comprises a business identifier, this business identifier being used to look up the location of the shop concerned.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein the location of a said shop is captured by obtaining the location of a cellular radio device positioned at the shop from a location server of a cellular radio infrastructure.

5. A method according to claim 2, wherein said information is presented through an initial image in the form of a map display showing the relative locations of the shops visited, information about the items of interest associated with each shop being selectively displayed from this image.

6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the item data comprises image data, the information presented in step (c) comprising at least a thumbnail of the image data captured for each item.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein the captured item data is passed to a service system where it is processed to identify the type of each item of interest and further data

is obtained about each item, the item type information and said further data being made available for remote access to effect said presentation in step (c).

8. A method according to claim 7, wherein said store data is provided to or obtained by said service system and is used to derive further data about each said shop, this further data being made available for remote access for use in said presentation in step (c).

9. A method according to claim 7, wherein said further data comprises hyperlink data to relevant specific information sources.

10. A method according to claim 9, comprising the further step of accessing further information in response to activation of a hyperlink presented in step (c) using said hyperlink data.

11. A method according to claim 7, wherein the processing of the captured data involves one or more of the following operations:
- extracting data from specific data fields;
- analysing image data included in said information using OCR techniques;
- matching image data included in said information against stored image data;
- interpreting bar code image data included in said information;
- applying speech recognition to recorded audio data included in said information.

12. A method according to claim 1, wherein the captured item data is processed, prior to the presentation of said information, to determine at least the types of said items of interest, the item types forming part of the information presented.

13. A method according to claim 12, wherein the processing of the captured data involves one or more of the following operations:
- extracting data from specific data fields;
- analysing image data included in said information using OCR techniques;
- matching image data included in said information against stored image data;

- interpreting bar code image data included in said information;

- applying speech recognition to recorded audio data included in said information.

**14.** A method according to claim 1, wherein said item data and said store data are both captured by a shopper at the or each shop and are subsequently downloaded to the shopper's local computer where step (c) is carried out, the method comprising the further step of passing at least some of the captured item data to a remote service system to obtain further data about an item of interest.

**15.** A method according to claim 14, wherein said remote service system is one run by the shop associated with said item of interest, the related store data being used to determine the contact data for said remote service system.

**16.** A method according to claim 14, wherein said item data is image data captured using a digital camera.

**17.** A method according to claim 14, wherein said item data for the item of interest in respect of which the remote service system has been contacted includes image data, the service system matching this data with corresponding image data held by itself whereby identify the item of interest concerned.

**18.** A method according to claim 1, wherein said item data, captured by a shopper at the or each shop, is subsequently downloaded to the shopper's local computer where said store data is input by the shopper to complete steps (b) and (c), the store data then being used to contact websites of the relevant shops to retrieve further data about at least selected ones of said items.

**19.** A method according to claim 18, wherein said item data is image data captured using a digital camera.

**20.** A method according to claim 18, wherein said item data for the item of interest in respect of which the remote service system has been contacted includes image data, the service system matching this data with corresponding image data held by itself whereby identify the item of interest concerned.

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**21.** A method according to claim 1, wherein at least one said item of interest is a product on offer for sale or hire.

**22.** A method according to claim 1, wherein at least one said item of interest is a service.

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**23.** A shopping-assistance computer program for controlling the operation of a general-purpose data processing apparatus, the computer program when running on the data processing apparatus, implementing:

-    receiving means for receiving and storing both item data about items of interest at
15    two or more shops, and store data indicative of the identity of said shops; and
-    presentation means for processing the received item and store data and presenting the processed data to show for each shop, information about the items of interest at that shop.

20    **24.** A computer program according to claim 23, wherein the received data is used by the presentation means to access further data about at least one of:

-    a said shop
-    a said item of interest;

this further data being also presented.

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**25.** A computer program according to claim 23, wherein said store data comprises location data.

**26.** A computer program according to claim 23, wherein the item data comprises image
30    data, the information presented by the presentation means comprising at least a thumbnail of the image data captured for each item.

27. A computer program according to claim 23, wherein the presentation means is operative to present said information, on a visual display unit of the data processing apparatus, through an initial image in the form of a map display showing the relative

5    locations of the shops visited, information about the items of interest associated with each shop being selectively displayed from this image.


28. A computer program according to claim 27, wherein said store data comprises location data, the presentation means using the location data associated with a said shop to

10   appropriately place a representation of the shop on the map display.